CHAPTER TWO: DECLARING THE METRICAL CONTRACT

The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. "Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked.
"Begin at the beginning," the King said, gravely, "and go on till you come to the end: then stop".[1]

How joyful am I made by this contract![2]

I had rather be a kitten and cry 'mew'
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.[3]

2.1. Two commonplace observations regarding poetry and its metre can be turned into powerful analytic tools in the investigation of biblical versification. The theory and method are set out in the first part of this chapter. An initial application to BH poetry follows in the second part.

2.1.1. One commonplace observation is that a poem can usefully be described statistically, and that its STATISTICAL PROFILE can be compared to others to develop a METRICAL TAXONOMY (Culley 1970). Of course, assuming that a metre must be the strictest of the strict, the purest of the pure, variable statistical profiles can only demonstrate the absence of metre in biblical poetry (thus Vance 2001). The concept of an "irregular metre" is an "oxymoron" (p. 39). On the other hand, if the moving target is in fact a somewhat loose metre such as those examined in §1.4, then the statistical profile becomes of fundamental importance.

2.1.2. The other idea developed in this chapter is the so-called METRICAL CONTRACT. It is a commonplace that the opening lines of a poem in some sense 'declare' its metrical structure. Accordingly, one fruitful strategy is to examine just the first lines of biblical poetry as the opening analytical gambit. By definition, every first line is a metrical contract. Consequently, induction has more than enough to work on with these first lines alone.[4]

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[1] *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Carrol 1971: 94).
[2] *Henry VI, Part I* (3.1.144).
[3] *Henry IV, Part I* (3.1.124).
[4] In light of the methodological strictures on lineation (§1.3.5), some might cry foul here. There are three responses. First, there must be some grist for the inductive mill. Second and relatedly, the objection would miss the philosophical distinction between *discovery* and *justification*. In this chapter, we are only concerned with discovery (hypothesis formation); in subsequent chapters, we will purse the justification of a specific formal proposal. Third and finally, in practical terms, no Hebraist will quibble with the lineation of the first lines adduced below with the exception of Num 23:7 (§2.4.2.4). Indeed, surprisingly even Vance (2001) adopts the relevant lineations without comment.

PART I

2.2. Tiberian Hebrew Baseline and Statistical Profiles

2.2.1. Methodologically, I insist on starting from the baseline of the well-known and well-understood Tiberian phonetics and phonology (Khan 2020) as empirically grounded. I posit an articulated PROSODIC HIERARCHY for TH (cf. Dresher 1994). The relevant layers are listed in (1).

(1)

I	INTONATIONAL PHRASE
φ	PHONOLOGICAL PHRASE
α	ACCENTUAL PHRASE
ω	PHONOLOGICAL WORD
F	MORAIC FOOT
σ	SYLLABLE
μ	MORA

2.2.2. Compare the counts per line. What do we find? "Significant patterns" emerge (Culley 1970: 27). This is a "useful means of investigation" (p. 16).

2.2.3. Culley (1970) creates statistical profiles by simply counting reconstructed syllables of several poems. At least two separate classes of biblical poetry emerge: one with a mode of eight syllables and another with a mode of ten syllables. The majority OCTOSYLLABIC system,[5] the focus of the present study, has a SIGNIFICANT RANGE of from seven to ten syllables per line.[6] Hardly the product of exclusively syntactic regularities. "In other words these examples show roughly the same configuration in their charts and summaries" (Culley 1970: 22). The emergent patterns suggest that "restrictions have been imposed upon the poetic structure … such patterns seem to suggest a metrical structure of some sort" (p. 27).

2.2.4. Vance's response to the negligible variability is instructive (2001: 182-184).

> Culley is careful not to declare that this demonstrates meter, since it surely does not, but that these data might prove useful for the question of meter. One is hard pressed to see how. All that seems to be demonstrated is that the lines (cola, verses, or whatever) are approximately the same length. But this has never been in dispute and hardly points conclusively to some underlying meter. Culley admits this latter point but fails to show what value syllable counts do have if one is not going to propose a syllabic meter (p. 184).

Clearly, Vance assumes that one must produce a strict syllable-counting system (read modernist English *haiku*) or else, why bother? But he misses the essential fact that, while lines are approximately the same length within a biblical poem, lines are of strikingly different lengths on average across the biblical corpus, falling into four or so classes.

2.2.5. It is a tremendous irony, therefore, that among the biblical acrostics, Vance (2001) unequivocally identifies two biblical metres through his statistical analysis. Examine Table 1

[5] I introduced the term 'octosyllabism' in DeCaen (2014).
[6] "Significant" in the sense of excluding oddball outliers.

compiled from Vance's statistical summaries (according to his own eclectic counting methods). His means have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 1: statistical profiles for complete acrostics

	Syllable					**Word**				
	$\bar{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	**mo**	x_{min}	x_{max}	$\bar{x}$	$\tilde{x}$	**mo**	x_{min}	x_{max}
Ps 25	17	16.5	17	12	30	7	7	8	5	12
	8	***8***	***8***	6	13	3	3	3	3	5
Ps 34	17	17	17	15	21	7	7	6	6	9
	8	***8***	***8***	6	10	4	4	4	3	5
Ps 37	16	16	17	8	26	7	6	6	4	11
	8	***8***	***9***	4	13	3	3	3	2	4
Ps 111	***8***	***8***	***8***	6	9	3	3	3	3	4
Ps 112	***8***	***8***	***8***	6	9	4	3	3	3	5
Ps 1197	16	16	17	12	23	6	6	6	4	10
	8	***8***	***8.5***			3	3	3		
Ps 145	18	18	18	12	23	7	7	7	5	10
	9	9	9	5	13	4	4	4	3	5
Pr 31:10-31	17	16	15	12	28	7	7	7	5	9
	8	***8***	***8***	5	18	3	3	3	3	4
Lam 1	13	13	13	9	19	6	5	5	4	8
	7	***7***	***7***	4	14	3	3	3	2	6
Lam 2	13	13	13	8	19	6	6	5	4	4
	7	***7***	***7***	3	13	3	3	3	1	5
Lam 3	13	13	14	10	19	6	6	6	4	9
	7	***7***	***7***	3	11	3	3	3	2	5
Lam 4	13	14	14	11	18	6	6	6	4	8
	7	***7***	***7***	4	11	3	3	3	2	4
Lam 5	17	16	16	11	22	7	6	6	5	9
	8	***8***	***9***	6	13	3	3	3	3	5

2.2.5.1. There are two types of couplets in Table 1: one based on the mean, median and mode of eight syllables (on average sixteen syllables per couplet) and the second based on the mean, median and mode of seven syllables (fourteen syllables per couplet).

2.2.5.2. The majority system of sixteen syllables (conventionally 4+4 'accents'; cf. English LONG METRE) is called the *mashal* or 'proverb' metre for its overwhelming domination of the book of Proverbs (§A.2). This is the metre of Job (§A.1) and the majority of the Psalms (§A.3). Not coincidently, Job, Proverbs and Psalms—the so-called Books of Truth[8]—are the only three books marked-up in the Tiberian 'poetic' accent system as a hand in glove.[9] One may be

[7] No stats per line. In this table, the larger unit is simply halved.

[8] The initial letters of איוב Job, משלי Proverbs, and תהלים Psalms spell out אמת 'truth'.

[9] "The fact that some of the Old Testament is poetry was recognized already by the Masoretes who devised a special system of accents for the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job" (Pope 1965: xlv). To be accurate, Job is marked up with *both* systems: the prose system for the prose, the poetic system for the poetry. Clearly the scribes could tell the difference between prose and poetry, even if many modern-day exegetes cannot.

forgiven for thinking that the poetic accent system was designed specifically for the octosyllabic line (DeCaen 2009).

2.2.5.3. A second system based on the same metrical backbone converges on fourteen syllables per couplet (conventionally 4+3 accents; cf. English COMMON METRE or BALLAD METRE) is known as the *qinah* or 'lamentation' metre, though it is not limited to just the four acrostics Lam 1-4. The *qinah* is not the object of the present analysis but is on the agenda in future work.

2.2.5.4. Ps 145 uniquely has the magic number nine. On closer examination, this psalm is text-critically problematic, as might be suspected. Feminine endings (line-final post-tonic syllables) are virtually the rule and anapests are thick on the ground. Further, the psalm has been edited with a heavy hand. This is clear, just to take one example, in the obvious extrametrical tag [loʕo:lɔ́:m vɔ:ʕɛ́:ð] 'for ever and ever' (Ps 145:1b, 2b, 21b). While such pious sentiment is certainly to be commended, the result is a radically skewed statistical profile.

2.3. Metrical Contract

2.3.1. The metaphor of the METRICAL CONTRACT is typically attributed to the distinguished poet John Hollander in his "Romantic Verse Form and the Metrical Contract" (1965) (e.g., Adams 1997: 10). As Baer (2006) explains,

> Once the poem's meter has been established in its first few lines, the reader will then expect the meter to continue in the same pattern, and he will derive great pleasure from its continued presence. Of course, sophisticated poets will intentionally make slight variations from their established meter to achieve certain poetic effects; thus, very few poems are perfectly regular from beginning to end. But all such changes must be executed carefully and subtly, with the full awareness that too many alterations will be discomforting for the reader (Baer 2006: 19).

Mary Oliver perfectly captures this theory of permissible variation:

> Lines of good poetry are apt to be a little irregular. A prevailing sense of rhythm is necessary, but some variation enhances the very strength of the pattern. The singsong poem is a dull poem (Oliver 1994: 44).

2.3.2. Vance (2001) locates an UNWRITTEN COMPACT in John Crowe Ransom's "The Strange Music of English Verse" (1956).

> We must suppose that there is a good understanding between the poet and his audience. Or there is an unwritten compact, with the accomplished poets saying to their readers: The language is rhythmical, but you can be sure that if you want to read it as prose the prose is there too, and easily intelligible. Read according to our meters and we shall not make you into fools; we on our side have not meant to be uttering nonsense (Ransom cited by Vance 2001: 30).
>
> Meter is a contract between the poet and the reader. The poet declares what he or she is going to do in the opening lines of the poem, and this, in turn, sets up the reader's

> expectation. The fulfilling of the contract may involve permissible variations to which the reader is sensitive and which give heightened pleasure for the reader, but for a poem to be considered metrical, it must exhibit a discernible and predictable pattern (Vance 2001: 491).

But for a real metaphor, we may turn to Mary Oliver.

> A reader beginning a poem is like someone stepping into a rowboat with a stranger at the oars; the first few draws on the long oars through the deep water tell a lot—is one safe, or is one apt to be soon drowned? A poem is that real a journey (Oliver 1994: 56-57).

We might panic at the thought of getting into that rowboat! Will we survive or will we be drowned?

2.3.3. Theory of Metrical Contract with Applications

2.3.3.1. The theory of the metrical contract or unwritten compact is the foundation of the empirical, inductive methodology pursued here and in subsequent chapters. Accordingly, it is vitally important that we run through some English examples to establish the theory and methodology in the concrete. Five examples have been chosen to explore some aspects in the application of this contractual theory.

2.3.3.2. Byron's gem "So, We'll Go No More a Roving" (Byron 1996: 507) is instructive in several respects. By definition, the first verse in (2) is the metrical contract. The final post-tonic syllable is generally extrametrical.[10]

(2) ***Só**, we'll gó no móre a róving*
*) * *) * *) * *) Δ
***So** láte intó the níght*
* *) * *) * *)

We learn that the poem will be in the 4+3 ballad metre (English common metre). It will be iambic but with the clipped initial line (missing initial syllable). Notice especially that the word *so* has two distinct metrical values by position.

The next verse in (3) must therefore match this established template. It must 'fulfill' the metrical contract.

(3) ***Thóugh** the héart be stíll as lóving*
*) * *) * *) * *) Δ
***And** the móon be stíll as bríght.*
* * *) * *) * *)

[10] A final post-tonic can be metrical, however. In "Napoleon's Farewell" (Byron 1996: 356), e.g., every odd line ends with a post-tonic syllable. We may say in this scenario that the post-tonic phenomenon is part of the metrical specification. The final syllables are metrical in this sense.

In a strict metre, the clitic *and* in l. 4 would head its own foot as does *though* in l. 3. However, the line must scan as a trimeter according to the declared 4+3 metrical contract. Accordingly, we must admit the variant of an anapest as a 'legal substitution' for the iamb at least at the beginning of the line. The contract is now signed, sealed, and delivered. How then do we scan the second stanza in (4)?

(4) *Fór the swórd outwéars its shéath,*
*) * *) * *) * *)
***And** the sóul wears óut the bréast,*
* * *) * *) * *)
***Ánd** the héart must páuse to bréathe,*
*) * *) * *) * *)
***And** lóve itsélf have rést.*
* *) * *) * *)

The scansion appears straightforward but notice the three distinct metrical values of *and*: first syllable of an intial anapest (l. 6), heading its own defective foot at the beginning of a line (l. 7), and the weak member of an iamb (l. 8). The point bears repeating: the metrical value of lexical items may vary by position. The item's precise metrical value is always dictated in context by the metrical contract.[11]

The poem concludes with the third stanza in (5).

(5) ***Thóugh** the níght was máde for lóving*
*) * *) * *) * *) Δ
***And** the dáy retúrns too sóon,*
* * *) * *) * *)
***Yét** we'll gó no móre a róving*
*) * *) * *) * *) Δ
***Bý** the líght of the móon*
*) * *) * * *)

The variable treatment of clitics is found here too. Compare *and* in l. 10, *yet* in l. 11, and *by* in l. 12. We should suspect in this light that any approach to biblical poetry that insists on assigning one and only one metrical value to classes of words is inadequate. The particular value is determined top-down.

2.3.3.3. Consider the playful twist on the ballad contract in (6): Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark" (Opie & Opie 1983: 291-307). How have the terms of the contract changed?

(6) *'Just the pláce for a Snárk!' the Béllman críed,*
* * *) * * *) * *) * *)
As he lánded his créw with cáre
* * *) * * *) * *)

[11] Note that an algorithmic approach to this metre cannot distinguish between ll. 6 and 7. Any algorithmic system of scanning must yield the same scansion in both cases.

Suppórting each mán on the tóp of the tíde
* *) * * *) * * *) * * *)
By a fínger entwíned in his háir.
* * *) * * *) * * *)

Ten of the metrical feet are anapests. Anapestic is the 'dominant' metre. There are four iambs, however. The iamb promises to be a regular substitution for the anapest. The metre will be 'loose' in these relative proportions. This metre is often called MIXED IAMBIC-ANAPESTIC.[12] It is then clear sailing except for two back-to-back stanzas. The first in (7) may stand for both.[13]

(7) *'In one móment I've séen what has hítherto béen*
* * *) * * *) * * *) * * *)
*Envéloped in ábsolute mýs**tery**,*
* *) * * *) * * *) **ΔΔ**
And withóut extra chárge I will gíve you at lárge
* * *) * * *) * * *) * * *)
*A Lésson in Nátural Hís**tory**.'* (ll. 373-376)
* *) * * *) * * *) **ΔΔ**

This sort of extrametricality in major pause is not new. We have already seen it in *The Tempest* (§1.4.7.1.1), a looser example of Shakespeare's later plays. Further, the rhyming scheme is unexceptionable in the English tradition. The point is that in a stricter metre, we would scan *mýsterý* and *hístorý* as two syllabic feet, not one (rhyming with either *my* or *me*). However, the strict terms of the metrical contract forbid this expected scansion. Again, we find metrical variation by position determined top-down.

2.3.3.4. The foundational principles of traditional English verse are observed, e.g., in the anonymous "Robin Hood and the Monk" *ca.* 1475 (Opie & Opie 1983: 22-32). Here is the beating heart of English folk verse. Consider then the first stanza in (8) as the metrical contract.

(8) *In súmmer, whén the sháws be shéen*
* *) * *) * *) * *)
And léaves be lárge and lóng
* *) * *) * *)
Hit ís full mérry ín fair fórest
* *) * *) * *) * *) Δ
To héar the fówlis sóng
* *) * *) * *)

We observe a perfect iambic metre in the 4+3 ballad structure. Notice that the clitic *when* supports a downbeat. Arguably, the metre is not strictly accentual. Already by the third stanza in (9), however, the seas become choppy.

[12] In the persuasive analysis of Fabb & Halle (2008: §3.1), the metre instanstantiated in "The Hunting" is better understood algorithmically as 'loose iambic'.
[13] Two other rhymes: *propriety, society* (ll. 378, 380) and *inanity, insanity* (l. 523).

(9) *Hít beféll on Whítsontíde,*
*) * *) * *) * *)
Éarly ín a May mórning,
*) * *) * * *) Δ
The sún úp fáir can shíne
* *) *) *) * *)
And the bírdes[14] *mérry can síng.*
* * *) * *) * * *)

The metrical feet now range over {1-3} syllables: the foundational, loose-iambic rhythm of traditional English verse. Notice the variable treatment of the clitics by position: *hit* (l. 9), *in* (l. 10) and *and* (l. 12). Finally and especially, see that *up* must indeed head its own foot to match the ballad template. The ballad continues in (10).

(10) *'This is a mérry mórning,' said Líttle Jóhn,*
* * * *) * *) * * *) * *)
'Be Hím that díed on trée;
* *) * *) * *)
A more mérry mán than Í am óne
* * *) * *) * * *) * *)
Lives nót in Chrístiantíe.'
* *) * *) * *)

There are three vital features in this stanza in (10). First, metrical regularity varies by relative position: more regular at the end, looser at the beginning. Next, the secondary word-stress on *Chríst-* can head its own foot. Third and even more important, the tetrasyllabic foot or QUARTUS PAEON[15] *this is a mér-* is a legal substitution, especially where an anapest is typically found (e.g., *a more mér-*). The clitic *is* cannot pick up the downbeat on pain of unmetricality.[16] Thus, the observed range of syllables per foot is {1-4} in traditional verse.

2.3.3.5. Yeats's poem "Are You Content?" (1991: 205f) challenges the reader to find the correct text-alignment given the metrical contract. The first verse in (11) establishes the 4+3 ballad metre. The first line declares an iambic backbone. But what shall we do with the second line? Does the line continue the strict metre in (11a) with the jarring alignment of *grand* (*bis*)? Are we meant to highlight *great* and *son*? Or does it align naturally with *grand* in (11b)?

[14] Bisyllabic plural *bird[ə]s.*
[15] The *paeon* is a group of four syllables. *Quartus* 'fourth' identifies which of the fours syllables is stressed.
[16] Dean Hoffman (p.c.) writes, "The metrics of the poem here are awkward … but this reading [in (9)] shows the sort of emphasis that a spoken treatment would need. It would support the sort of theatrical scansion that I found in my reading of the *Gest* [*of Robyn Hode*]'s performance".

(11) *I cáll on thóse that cáll me són,*
* *) * *) * *) * *)

Grandson, or great-grandson
(a) * *) * *) * *)
(b) *) * *) * *) Δ

Yeats now taunts the reader with the second verse in (12). There is only one way to scan l. 3, however: effectively introducing a paeon and also confirming (11b). The metrical contract must be respected at all costs and the basic iambic metre is still clear enough. The clitic *or* cannot head a foot without fatally violating the metrical contract.

(12) *On úncles, áunts, great-úncles or great áunts*
* *) * *) * *) * * * *)
To júdge what Í have dóne.
* *) * *) * *)

That this is the correct approach is confirmed by lines 7-8 in (13) and extends to lines 13-14 in (14). This is again the traditional 'loose' metre with a range of {1-4} syllables per foot. Notice the variable treatment of the clitic pronoun *I* in l. 4 in (12) and l. 8 *bis* in (13). The problem is driven home in the final verse in (14) by the variable treatment of the identical string *but I am not content*. The pronoun is now prosodically elevated by the metre with exegetical consequence.

(13) *Eyes spíritualísed by déath can júdge*
* *)*** *) * *) * *)
***I** cannót but **I** am nót conténtˊ*
* * *) * * * *) * *)

(14) *Sándymount Córbets, that nótable mán*
*) * * *) * * *) * * *)
Old Wílliam Póllexfén
* *) * *) * *)

(15) *By án old húnter tálking with Góds;*
* *) * *) * *) * * *)
*But **Í** am nót contént.*
* *) * *) * *)

The important take-away here is that the metrical analysis cannot simply be read off the text algorithmically. In particular, a formal algorithm cannot distinguish between the distinct parses of *but I am not content*. Instead, we must try to align the text as best we can to meet the metrical strictures that have already been formally declared in the first lines.

2.3.3.6. The last exhibit of the making and fulfilling of a metrical contract is Coleridge's (in)famous "Christabel" (677 lines[17] in Coleridge 1951: 31-43). The first lines in (16) do appear to establish the metre of "The Hunting of the Snark" (§2.3.3.3) and Fabb & Halle treat it as such (2008: §3.1).

(16) *'Tis the míddle of níght by the cástle clóck,*
* * *) * * *) * * *) * *)
And the ówls have awákened the crówing cóck
* * *) * * *) * * *) * *)

However, the next three lines in (17) bring the metrical gallop to an abrupt halt. They are scanned here according to the iambic-anapestic metre proposed for "Christabel" by Fabb & Halle (2008). What happened?

(17) *Tu—whít!—Tu—whóo!*
* *) * *)[18]
And hárk, agáin! the crówing cóck,
* *) * *) * *) * *)
How drówsilý it crów.
* *) * *) * *)[19]

Coleridge is explicit, however, regarding the terms and conditions of his metrical contract. Every line has exactly four metrical downbeats or 'accents'.

> I have only to add that the metre of [the] Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve,[20] yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. (Coleridge 1951: p. 25)

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[17] Seventeen lines are to be excluded, however, where he drops out of the basic tetrameter into tight stanzaic structure: lines 263-266, 271-275, 282-285, 632-635. Presumably, these are highlighted with a bearing on exegesis.

[18] Established elsewhere:

From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
* *) * *)
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell! (ll. 309f)
* *) * *)

[19] Curiously, Adams (1997: 6) scans line 5 with a missing beat (trimeter) against the stated principle of the metrical contract of *four* accents:

How drowsily it crew.
* *) * *) * *) Ø

[20] From four to fourteen is actually the observed range.

The explicit metrical contract dictates the correct scansion in (18). This is not the garden variety of loose metre. It is indeed founded, as he says, "on a new principle". The principle is top-down and not bottom-up.

(18) *Tú—whít!—Tú—whóo!*
*) *) *) *)[21]
And hárk, agáin! the crówing cóck,
* *) * *) * *) * *)
Hów drówsilý it créw.
*) *) * *) * *)

According to Coleridge, we are explicitly not counting syllables. This makes two key predictions as to what will be found in subsequent lines. First, we expect glaring minimal pairs. Consider a representative pair in (19).

(19) (a) ***Of*** *the húge, broad-bréasted, óld oak trée.* (l. 42)
* * *) * *) * *) * *)

(b) ***Óf*** *her ówn betróthèd knight* (l. 28)
*) * *) * *) * *)

The first line in (19a) is consistent with the conventional iambic-accentual metre. Indeed, it his strict practice to discount an initial clitic elsewhere.[22] The anomalous scansion in (19b), however, is forced upon us by the metrical contract: there must be four metrical feet. In brief, we are not dealing here with the conventions of mixed iambic-anapestic verse.

The other prediction is that there will be feet of more than three syllables and lines of more than twelve syllables. The two examples in (20) confirm the prediction *pace* Fabb & Halle (2008: 74).

(20) (a) *And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity.* (l. 277)
* * *) * *) * * * *) * * *)**

(b) *Flúttering, and úttering féarful móan* (l. 535)
*) * * * *) * * *) * *)

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[21] See also

What sees she there? (l. 57)
*) *) *) *)

[22] For example, his strict practice in the iambic-anapestic metre of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (625 lines; Coleridge 1951: 6-24). The relevant line is

Of *the Spírit that plágued us só* (l. 132; tetrameter in ballad 4+3)
* * *)* * *) * *)

Line 277 in (20a) with its sprawling fourteen syllables is wholly remarkable. There is no way to avoid the scansion if we are to match the declared 'four accent' template. Line 535 in (20b) is somewhat problematic, since it might be argued that the intended reading is *flutt'ring*. However, this is not consistent with the poem that relies for its rhythm on the three syllables. Moreover, elsewhere comparable words scan as three syllables. An excellent example is *númeróus* in ll. 506 and 509, not *num'rous*.

PART II

2.4. Biblical Octosyllabic Contracts

2.4.1. The basic concepts have now been established definitively and concretely in Part I: (a) statistical profiles and identifiable corpora and (b) the declaration and fulfillment of metrical contracts. The object now in Part II is to examine the first lines of key octosyllabic poems. The focus is naturally on Job, Proverbs, and the Psalms. However, methodologically it would be better to start from verse marked-up with the prose cantillation (Price 2010: Part I).

2.4.2. Prose Accentuation. TH musical transformations obscure an otherwise straightforward analysis by creating VIRTUAL DISJUNCTIVE ACCENTS (Price 2010; hence DeCaen 2009).

2.4.2.1. Lam 5:1a. Octosyllabic Lam 5, however, is marked-up with the 'prose' accentuation and thereby mitigates this obscuring difficulty. This lament is not an acrostic (or is it?), yet it is bundled with four acrostics. Fortunately, Vance (2001) reasonably includes this lament as an honorary acrostic, as it were, and provides a detailed statistical analysis.

2.4.2.1.1. Accordingly, a parade example of the octosyllabic metrical contract is Lam 5:1a in (21).

(21) זָכְר יְהוָה מֶה־הָיָה לָּנוּ
'Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us' (Lam 5:1a)

(● ● (● ● ● (● ● (● ●
zaχóːʀ ʔaðoː**nɔ́ː j** mèː- hɔ́ːjɔː lɔ́ːnuː
* *) * * *) * *) * *) *

2.4.2.1.2. I am adapting the useful notational conventions of Fabb & Halle (2008). I continue to project syllable structure downwards with the asterisk and iambic right parenthesis. I now project the TH moraic structure upwards with the 'dot' and trochaic left parenthesis.[23] This is a dual or parallel scansion. Finally, I am using the **bold font** to mark lexically or inherently heavy TH syllables that project two dots: here /**nɔː j**/.

[23] I assume that a moraic foot is always a trochee. See Hayes (1995: §§4, 6.1).

2.4.2.1.3. The TH prosodic count is 2 φ, 2 α, 5 W,[24] 4 ω, 4 μF (moraic feet), 4 σF (syllabic feet), 10 σ, and 9 μ.

2.4.2.1.4. We are immediately confronted by two related questions of great consequence.

2.4.2.1.4.1. First, how should we treat the TH schwa /CV/? In (21), there are two schwas [za] and [ʔa]. It is by no means obvious that the schwa should project an asterisk downwards. Indeed, Bickell does in fact discount the TH schwa on the analogy of classical Syriac verse.[25] A modified scansion with eight asterisks is added in (22).

(22) (● ● (● ● ● (● ● (● ●
zaχó:ʀ ʔaðo:**nɔ́:j** mè:- hɔ́:jɔ: lɔ́:nu:
*) * *) * *) * *) *

It might even be that some schwas 'count' and some do not *by position*. However, every student of biblical poetry treats the TH schwa syllable as a metrical syllable in its own right.[26]

2.4.2.1.4.2. The second vexatious question is, how do we metrically evaluate the divine name יהוה? (Non-Hebraists are referred to Excursus I (§2.6)). Methodologically, we must cleave to the TH baseline unless forced otherwise. In the first instance, then, trisyllabic and trimoraic [ʔaðo:**nɔ́:j**] 'my/the LORD' enters into the metrical calculation. As we already know, there is no particular difficulty with an anapest as a legal substitution in a loose metre.

Hebraists prejudge the question and reflexively substitute bisyllabic and bimoraic [jahvɛ́:] in all cases. For those that are adamant in this matter, the simple technical fix is to not project an asterisk for [ʔa] as in (23). Effectively, the syllabic count is the range {7-10} if post-tonic [nu:] can reasonably be extrametrical.

(23) zaχó:ʀ ʔaðo:**nɔ́:j** mè:- hɔ́:jɔ: lɔ́:nu:
* *) Δ * *) * *) * *) *

[24] W for orthographic word; see n. 7.

[25] See the critical summaries of Bickell's analysis by Cobb (1905: ch. 5) and Döller (1899: 42-46).

[26] Further, all are agreed that a schwa arising by TH anaptyxis because of an infelicitous syllable contact is to be ignored. On sonority and anaptyxis, see DeCaen (2003); see further Alvestad & Edzard (2009). This would then be a paradigmatic example of 'undoing' late TH phonological rules *metri causa*, both derivationally and diachronically.

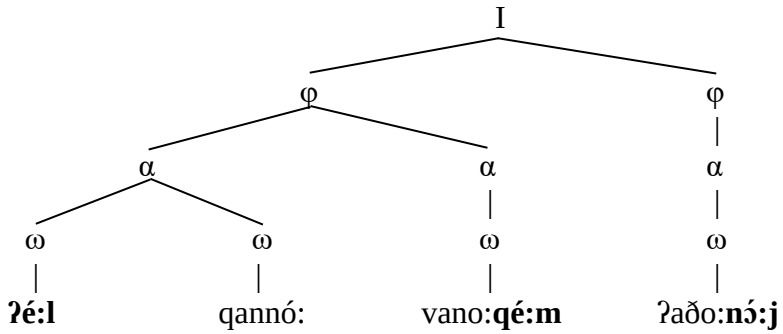
2.4.2.2. Nah 1:2a. Similarly, the first line of the acrostic in (24) is of vital importance. It is to be lamented that we do not have the complete acrostic in Nahum.

(24) אֵ֣ל קַנּ֤וֹא וְנֹקֵם֙ יְהוָ֔ה
'God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth' (Nah 1:2a)

(●● ● (● ● (● ● ● (● ●
ʔé:l qannó: vano:**qé:m** ʔaðo:**nɔ́:j**
*) * *) * * *) * * *)

2.4.2.2.1. To begin with, the TH prosodic structure of Nah 1:2a is asymmetrical: the metrical CAESURA is not MEDIAL. Specifically, the prosodic structure is left-recursive (left-branching) as can be seen in the prosodic parse in (25). Here, the conjunctive accent *mahpak* assigned to [qannó:] is a 'virtual disjunctive' by musical transformation: disjunctive *geresh* → *mahpak*.

(25)



2.4.2.2.2. Thus, the TH prosodic count in (25) is 2 φ, **3 α**, **4 W**, 4 ω, 4 μF, 4 σF, {7-9} σ (depending on the treatment of schwas), and **10 μ**.

2.4.2.2.3. We have thus made some inductive progress by already eliminating the TH timing-units α, W, and μ. Notice that DeCaen (2009) proposes that a line must have two and *only two* α and so is soundly refuted by the 3 α in asymmetrical Nah 1:2a. Indeed, every asymmetrical line will refute DeCaen (2009).

2.4.2.3. Amos 1:3a. The line from prophetic speech in (26) offers no surprises. I assume that syllables bearing a TH disjunctive accent are heavy by position: here [ʃɔ́:] projects two dots.[27] Notice the schwa [ʃa].

(26) עַל־שְׁלֹשָׁה֙ פִּשְׁעֵ֣י דַמֶּ֔שֶׂק
'For three transgressions of Damascus' (Amos 1:3a)

(● ●(●● ● (● ● (● ●
ʕal-ʃalo:ʃɔ́: pʰiʃʕé: dammé:sɛq
*) * * *) * *) * *) *

[27] Presumably, this weight is required to accommodate the pitch movement at the right-edge of the phonological phrase.

The count in (26) is 2 φ, **3 ω**, 4 μF, 4 σF, and {7-9} σ if the segol [ɛ] in [sɛq] can be discounted as if [dammé:sq].[28] Notice that in this case, we have knocked out the TH phonological word ω as the metrical timing-unit. More inductive progress.

2.4.2.4. Num 23:7a. The metrical contract in (27) is obscured by lineation. Regardless, the line is of paramount inductive importance.

(27) מִן־אֲרָם יַנְחֵנִי בָלָק
'Balak hath brought me from Aram' (Num 23:7a)

```
 ●     (● ● ● (● ●  ●(● ●
min-ʔaʁɔ́:m janħé:ni: vɔ:lɔ́:q
 *)   * *)   *   *) *   * *)
```

The count in (27) is 2 φ, **3 μF**, 4 σF, and {7-8} σ. We have now knocked out TH μF as a candidate timing-unit. Further, with the four ranges of syllables {7-10}, {7-9}, {7-9}, and {7-8}, a strict syllable-count is now restricted to {7-8} σ.

2.4.2.5. Deut 32:1a. The metrical contract of the lengthy 4+4 poem in Deut 32 in (28) is of some interest. Notice that I have stopped projecting moraic dots upwards since both TH μ and μF have been eliminated from consideration.

(28) הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וַאֲדַבֵּרָה
'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak' (Deut 32:1a)

```
ha:ʔazí:nu: haʃʃɔ:má:jim wa:ʔaðabbé:ʁɔ:
 *    *) *  *) *  *) *      *)   *  *) *
```

2.4.2.5.1. In (28), there are actually five σF. However, I analyze the prosaicizing definite article [haʃ] as secondary. See, e.g., [ʔɛl-ʃɔ:má:jim] 'to heaven' (Deut 32:40a) without the definite article (but with the article [ʔɛl-haʃʃɔ:má:jim] in some witnesses). Or better, there is the striking minimal pair within Ps 57: [ʕal-haʃʃɔ:má:jim] in v. 6 and [ʕal-ʃɔ:má:jim] in v. 12.

2.4.2.5.2. In short, I consider the definite article as 'extrametrical'. However, I never delete such syllables from the text. I simply do not project an asterisk downwards as in (29).

(28) ha:ʔazí:nu: haʃʃɔ:má:jim wa:ʔaðabbé:ʁɔ:

```
 *    *) *  Δ  *  *) *      *)   *  *) *
```

2.4.2.5.3. Thus, the prosodic count is 2 φ, 4 σF, and {8-13} σ.[29] More progress: the number of σ, regardless of how we count them, converges on exactly 8 σ.

[28] Alternatively, the final post-tonic may be ignored just as the [nu:] in Lam 5:1a.
[29] Including the Tiberian anaptyctic syllables [ʔa] *bis*.

2.4.3. Job. Joban poetry is the mother lode of 4+4 verse *par excellence* and is the natural focus of any study thereof. The central, finely wrought composition consists of three rounds or 'cycles' of speeches. Alas, the third cycle breaks down into a critical muddle[30] and is prudently excluded from Appendix §A.1. Four first lines command our initial attention as metrical contracts.

2.4.3.1. Job 1:21a. There is a poetic snippet embedded in the prose prologue. My guess is that it is a learned quotation from a longer, well-known poem. Be that as it may, the first line is given in (29). There are 2 φ, 4 σF, and **{9-10} σ**. The σ is now eliminated as the timing-unit in a strict syllabic metre.

(29) עָרֹם יָצָ֣תִי מִבֶּ֔טֶן אִמִּ֑י
'Naked came I out of my mother's womb' (Job 1:21a)
ʕɔ:**ʁó:m** jɔ:sˁɔ́:θi: mibbé:tˁɛn ʔimmí:
* *) * *) * * *) * * *)

This first line again raises the persistent problem of the TH SEGOLATE.[31] For the purpose of metrical investigation, Hebraists universally read monosyllabic [bé:tˁn] for which there is no

[30] My own sense, for what it is worth, is that the philosophical meat of the composition was in the third cycle. However, for whatever reason, the content of the third cycle was objectionable.

[31] The TH segolate has four allomorphs, e.g., [nɔ́:fɛʃ] 'soul' (major pausal), [né:fɛʃ] (elsewhere), suffixed [nafʃ+í:] 'my soul', and plural [nafɔ:ʃ+ó:θ] 'souls'. There is the related problem of the feminine suffix: free [mɛmʃɔ:l+ɔ́:] 'dominion', bound [mɛmʃɛ́:l+ɛθ], suffixed [mɛmʃal-t-í:] 'my dominion', and plural [mɛmʃɔ:l+ó:θ] 'dominions'. The Hebrew name of the diacritic representing [ɛ] is *segol*, hence 'segolate' with reference to the post-tonic [CɛC].

The Hebraist convention is to posit the suffixed allomorph [nafʃ] as basic, both derivationally and diachronically. For a generative review of the conventional wisdom, see Coetzee (1999). See DeCaen (2002) for my initial response to Coetzee. I disagree with the historical reconstruction (DeCaen 1992, 2002). I am prepared to argue for a bisyllabic TH lexical representation from first principles of generative phonology.

As it turns out, there is an absolutely perfect counterpart to the Hebrew segolate in English verse: 'English segolates', if you will. For example, as everyone knows, *heaven* may scan as one (sometimes spelled *heav'n*) or two syllables as the metre requires. Thus, also *having, being, given, stolen, seven, eleven, prayer, year, toil, whither, whether, evil, devil, angel, flower, power, mother, father, never, ever, therefore, were it, to it, by our, albeit, mayor, growest, knowest, cursèd, blessèd, fire, fuel, fowl, howl, hour*, etc. etc.

Shakespeare loves minimal pairs in his *Sonnets*. Take the following representative examples. Read *usèd* with the post-tonic syllable [əd]. Read *únused* [d] with initial stress. Contrast the minimal pair *hours* [ərz] with *flowers* [rz].

*Thy **únused** béauty múst be tómbed with thée,*
*Which **úsèd** líves th' exécutór to bé.* (4.13-14)

*The **hóurs** thát with géntle wórk did fráme …*
*But **flówers** distílled, though théy with wínter méet* (5.1, 13)

empirical motivation. However, working from the TH baseline, our methodology does impose the bisyllabic TH reading [bɛ́:tˤɛn] while we wait for (dis)confirmation.

2.4.3.2. Job 3:3a. The poetic prologue in Job 3 is of great interest as a tight, stand-alone composition. Its first line is given in (30). There are 2 φ and 4 σF.

(30) יֹאבַד יֹום אִוָּלֶד בּוֹ
'Let the day parish wherein I was born' (Job 3:3a)
jó:vað **jó:m** ʔivvɔ́:lɛð bó:
*) * *) * *) * *)

2.4.3.2.1. There are two features here worth stressing. The first is stress. TH lexical stress-assignment is a constant. Surface stress bounces all around because of interacting post-lexical rules. For simplicity and consistency, it would be so much better to assign the fixed lexical stress in the input. Regardless, in (30), there are two instances of TH STRESS RETRACTION occasioned by STRESS CLASH: [jo:vá:ð **jó:m**] → [jó:vað **jó:m**] and [ʔivvɔ:lé:ð bó:] → [ʔivvɔ́:lɛð bó:]. This stress-retraction phenomenon marks Job 3 stylistically.[32] We are committed to the TH reading in the first instance but clearly stress-assignment is going to be a persistent question.

2.4.3.2.2. The second feature worth noting is the absence of the subordinating conjunction [ʔaʃɛ́:ʀ] 'that'. Poetic diction manages just fine without this 'prose particle'. Every instance thereof should be viewed with suspicion as secondary.

2.4.3.3. Job 4:2a. The first line of the poem proper (first cycle) is provided in (31). Crucially, notice that while there are still 4 σF, there is **only one φ** (equivalently, one disjunctive accent). TH phonological phrasing φ is therefore eliminated as the metrical organizing principle.

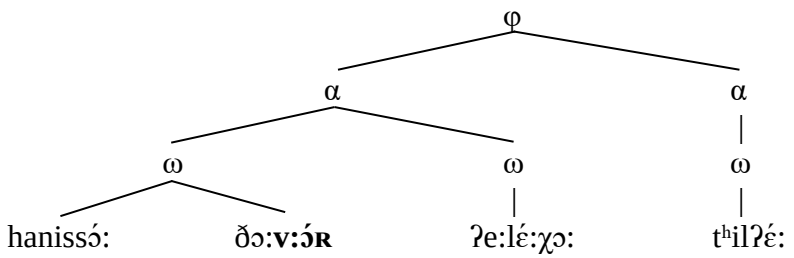
(31) הֲנִסֶּה דָבָר אֵלֶיךָ תִּלְאֶה
'If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?' (Job 4:2a)
hanissɔ́: ðɔ:**v:ɔ́ʀ** ʔe:lé:χɔ: tʰilʔé:
* * *) * *) * *) * * *)

In this light, the bisyllabic [bɛ́:tˤɛn] 'womb' in (29) would be no different than *flower* or *heaven*: bisyllabic but scanning as one beat or two beats as the metrical context requires.

[32] On the prevalence of TH stress retraction in poetry vs. prose, see Revell (1987: §1.4, p. 10). It is hard to resist the conclusion that the prevalence is deliberate in the Proverbs.

In passing, note that I assume the prosodic analysis in (32). In this analysis, the accent *illuy* on [hanissɔ́:] is the lawful substitute for the TH hyphen or *maqqeph*.

(32)

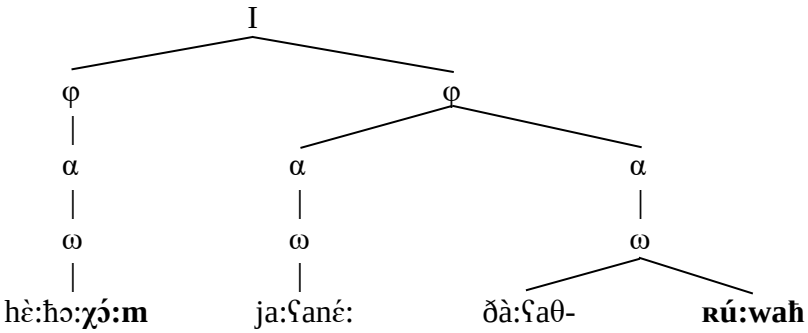


2.4.3.4. Job 15:2a. Finally, there is the first line of the second cycle in (33) with its 4 σF. Note that [ðà:ʕaθ] is a segolate, hence the temptation to read monosyllabic [ðà:ʕθ]. Note further that (a) the breaking vowel in [ʀú:ħ] → [ʀú:waħ] may be discounted, (b) the anaptyctic vowel [jaʕ] → [ja:ʕa] may also be discounted, and (c) there is a schwa [ha] → [hὲ:]. These three TH post-lexical rules should be 'undone' uncontroversially.

(33) הֲחָכָ֣ם יַעֲנֶ֣ה דַ֣עַת־ר֑וּחַ
'Should a wise man utter vain knowledge?' (Job 15:2a)
hὲ:ħɔ:**χɔ́:m** ja:ʕanέ: ðà:ʕaθ-**ʀú:waħ**
* * *) * *) *) * *)

2.4.3.4.1. Because *revia* on [hὲ:ħɔ:χɔ́:m] is a major disjunctive, the *mereka* on [ja:ʕanέ:] must be a virtual *dechi* disjunctive at the right-edge of an accentual phrase (α). The TH prosodic analysis must be the right-recursive structure in (34).

(34)



2.4.3.4.2. Notice the string **)*)** introduced by [ðà:ʕaθ] in (33). Of the two distinct types of loose iambic metre proposed by Fabb & Halle (2008), what I call TYPE A LOOSE IAMBIC METRE, is now eliminated from consideration.[33] TYPE A LOOSE IAMBIC METRE is the only game in town.

[33] I denominate Type A vs. Type B with reference to Fabb & Halle (2008: §3.1) and their two loose iambic algorithms based on different definitions of their STRESS MAXIMUM: Definition A ((2), p. 68) and Definition B ((31), p. 78). In practical terms and to simplify, Type B permits the string **)*)** while Type A does not.

2.4.4. Proverbs. It seems clear that in the book of Proverbs we are dealing with apples, oranges, and perhaps a few lemons. On the other hand, one collection of proverbs does stand out with the desired profile: the collection isolated as the "The Proverbs of Solomon" (Prov 10–22:16). Further, there is the octosyllabic acrostic in Prov 31:10-31 that receives detailed analysis by Vance (2001).

Four metrical contracts may be presented together in (35)-(38). Crucially, in all cases there are still 4 σF. Stress-retraction with secondary cliticization has applied in (35) and (36). Cliticization of the segolate has also applied in (38) as in (33). The noun [já:jin] 'wine' in (37) is also a segolate. The definite article [haɻ] in (37) might be secondary. Notice especially how naturally the double segolate [ʔè:ʃɛθ-ħá:jil] scans in (38).

(35) בֵּן חָכָם יְשַׂמַּח־אָב
'A wise son maketh a glad father' (Prov 10:1a)
bé:n ʔɔ:**ðɔ́:m** jasammaħ-**ʔɔ́:v**
*) * *) * *) * *)

(36) מַעֲנֶה־רַךְ יָשִׁיב חֵמָה
'A soft answer turneth away wrath' (Prov 15:1a)
mà:ʕanɛʀ-ʀá:χ jɔ:**ʃí:v** ħe:mɔ́:
*) * *) * *) * *)

(37) לֵץ הַיַּיִן הֹמֶה שֵׁכָר
'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging' (Prov 20:1a)
lé:sʕ haɻɻá:jin ho:mé: ʃe:**χɔ́:ʀ**
*) * *) * * *) * *)

(38) אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא
'Who can find a virtuous woman?' (Prov 31:10a)
ʔè:ʃɛθ-ħá:jil mí: jimsʕɔ́:
*) * *) * *) * *)

2.4.5. Psalms. There are 150 psalms and multiple metres—assuming there is metre. Further, 4+3 and 4+2 systems may present the appearance of octosyllabism. Scanning 150 psalms just to isolate corpora is not practical for our quite limited objective. However, Vance (2001) again provides the metrical roadmap. He helpfully suggests that the focus should fall squarely if not exclusively on the acrostics, reasoning that the acrostic format best controls lineation.

2.4.5.1. Accordingly, we look first at the metrical contracts of the five complete acrostics in our database (§A.3): Ps 34, 37, 111, 112, and 145.[34]

(39) אֲבָרֲכָה אֶת־יְהוָה בְּכָל־עֵת
'I will bless the Lord at all times' (Ps 34:2a[1a])
ʔavɔ:ʀaχɔ́: ʔɛθ-ʔaðo:**nɔ́:j** baχɔl-ʕé:θ
* *) * *) Δ * * *) * * *)

[34] Minus Ps 25 as textually corrupt.

(40) אַל־תִּתְחַר בַּמְּרֵעִים
‘Fret not thyself because of evil-doers’ (Ps 37:1a)
ʔal-tʰiθħá:ʀ bammaʀe:**ʕí:m**
*) * *) *) * * *)

(41) אוֹדֶה יְהוָה בְּכָל־לֵבָב
‘I will praise the LORD with my whole heart’ (Ps 111:1a)
ʔo:ðé: ʔaðo:**nó:j** baχɔl-le:**vó:v**
* *) * * *) * *) * *)

(42) אַשְׁרֵי־אִישׁ יָרֵא אֶת־יְהוָה
‘Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD’ (Ps 112:1a)
ʔa:ʃʀe:-**ʔí:ʃ** jɔ:ʀé: ʔεθ-ʔaðo:**nó:j**
*) * *) * *) Δ * * *)

(43) אֲרוֹמִמְךָ אֱלוֹהַי הַמֶּלֶךְ
‘I will extol thee, my God, O king’ (Ps 145:1a)
ʔaʀo:mimχɔ́: ʔεlo:**há:j** hammé:lεχ
* *) * *) * * *) * *) *

2.4.5.2. I have taken the liberty of excluding the direct-object marker [ʔεθ-] as a secondary prose particle in (39) and (42), indicated by the placeholder Δ. Otherwise, the number of σF and μF would increase to five. Again, the prosaicizing particle is never deleted *per se*, it simply does not project an asterisk (extrametrical). As a result, in all cases there are 4 σF.

2.5. Summary and Prospect

2.5.1. As we have seen, statistical analysis plays two essential roles in our metrical study.

2.5.1.1. Importantly, such analysis identifies distinct biblical corpora (§2.2.4) and thereby provides substantial support for a poetic metre *of some kind*.

2.5.1.2. Just as importantly, a review of eighteen metrical contracts has eliminated from consideration the TH prosodic units {φ, α, W, ω, σ, μF, μ} assuming initially that (a) we are dealing with the same metre in all cases and (b) the prosaicizing particles are extrametrical. Presumably, this conclusion can be extended to the ancient biblical dialects *mutatis mutandis*. The anti-metrical argument thus receives substantial empirical support.

2.5.1.3. Table 2 summarizes the findings in which the columns are shaded at the point the prosodic units are eliminated. Here, the number of TH syllables is marked σ^{+} whereas σ^{-} makes allowance for all discounting. This distinction is extended to μ^{+} versus μ^{-}.

Table 2: summary of Tiberian statistical analysis

	φ	**α**	**W**	**ω**	**σF**	**σ⁻**	**σ⁺**	**μF**	**μ⁻**	**μ⁺**
Lam 5:1a	2	2	5	4	4	7	10	4	8	9
Nah 1:2a	2	3	4	4	4	7	9	4	10	10
Amos 1:3a	2	2	4	3	4	7	9	4	8	9
Num 34:7a	2	2	4	3	4	7	8	3	9	9
Deut 32:1a	2	2	3	3	4*	8	13	4*	8	11
Job 1:21a	2	2	4	4	4	9	10	4	10	12
Job 3:3a	2	2	4	4	4	7	7	4	8	9
Job 4:2a	1	3	4	4	4	10	10	4	11	12
Job 15:2a	2	3	4	3	4	7	10	4	7	10
Prov 10:1a	2	2	4	3	4	7	7	4	9	9
Prov 15:1a	2	2	4	3	4	7	8	4	8	10
Prov 20:1a	2	2	4	4	4	7	8	4	9	10
Prov 31:10a	2	2	4	3	4	5	7	4	5	8
Ps 34:2a	1	2	5	3	4*	6	11	4*	7	9
Ps 37:1a	1	2	3	2	4	6	7	4	7	7
Ps 111:1a	2	2	4	3	4	7	9	4	9	9
Ps 112:1a	2	2	5	3	4*	7	9	4*	9	10
Ps 145:1a	1	2	3	3	4	7	10	4	9	9
mean[35]	***2***	***2***	***4***	***3***	***4***	***7***	***9***	***4***	***8***	***10***
median	***2***	***2***	***4***	***3***	***4***	***7***	***9***	***4***	***8.5***	***9***
mode	***2***	***2***	***4***	***3***	***4***	***7***	***10***	***4***	***9***	***9***

*With prosaic particle: five units

2.5.1.4. Eliminating the TH prosodic units from consideration effectively eliminates quantitative, syllabic, strict accentual-syllabic, and Type A loose accentual-syllabic metres. This is inductive progress and not to be lamented.

2.5.2. On the other hand, there is still much room for optimism on at least two counts.

2.5.2.1. The crucial finding is that the syllabic foot σF has not yet been eliminated. Thus, the accentual metre is still a contender if by 'accent' we mean the TH syllabic foot (§1.2.3, n. 17). Relatedly, the Type B loose accentual-syllabic metre also remains in contention.

2.5.2.2. Further, the count of four σF is also consistent with the English top-down isometric/melogenic metre surveyed in Part I.

2.5.3. I should hasten to add that there is nothing original in the foregoing analysis.

2.5.3.1. Taking TH phonology seriously is exceptional but not new. Furthermore, all can agree that octosyllabic lines *typically* have four somethings, whatever they are. Nor is an accentual-syllabic metre a novel proposal.[36]

[35] Rounded to nearest whole number.

[36] Vance (2001) quickly serveys two accentual-syllabic proposals (pp. 207-220). He looks at Hare (1736) and Saalschütz (1825) and rightly rejects their implementations of the idea. He then

2.5.3.2. Mowinckel (1962) in particular suggests a loose accentual-syllabic metre for what he felicitously denominates the "professional poetry" of Job, Proverbs and the Psalms (vol. 2, p. 162), crediting Hölscher (1920) at every point. Mowinckel asserts that "there is an obvious tendency towards fixed rules for the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables" (p. 162).

2.5.3.3. In the end, Mowinckel cannot regularize the metre, concluding that we "do not yet know anything about the detailed rules for the alternation of 'iambs' and 'anapests'" (p. 163). He fell back on the theory formalized in DeCaen (2009): lines consist of *either* four feet *or* three feet. This is why Vance reasonably counts Mowinckel among the proponents of accentual metre (2001: 158-163).

2.5.4. The inductive question then becomes: What *must* be true, *assuming* that the lines are metrical and the poets can count? What metrical principle can *regularize* lines as tetrameters where Mowinckel failed? What are the detailed rules for the alternation of iambs and anapests? In ch. 3, we continue to pursue the inductive approach and ask repeatedly, what must be true, assuming that all fourty-four lines of Ps 111-112—unambiguously delineated by the acrostic principle and the most regular among the octosyllabics—actually fulfill the metrical contracts declared in their first lines? Then in ch. 4, we ask, what must be true of the lines isolated by linear refrains?

2.6. Excursus: Theonymy

2.6.1. The reading of the divine tetragrammaton יהוה and the related אדני , אלהים, and אל is the bane of BH metrical studies. The following discussion is based primarily on Parke-Taylor (1975) and van der Toorn (1995) and is confined to just the metrically relevant details.

2.6.2. Briefly, Greek transcriptions support both the conventional bisyllabic reading **yahwé* [jahvé:] and the alternative **yahṓ* or better **yaháw* [jɔ:hó:]. At least from the third century BCE the tetragrammaton was also read אדני [ʔaðo:nó:j] 'my lord'. It is not clear how old this practice is.

2.6.3. In some cases, the Q is actually אלהים [ʔɛlo:hí:m] 'God'. Relatedly, there is also the conspicuous late practice of replacing יהוה with אלהים 'God' (cf. Aramaic אלהא 'God') in Chronicles and some Psalms (Ginsburg 1966: 368f).

2.6.4. The textual problem is complicated by the appearance of אדני where the tetragrammaton might be expected. A further complication is the apparent counter-tendency to substitute אדני/יהוה for אל [ʔé:l], the divine name 'El' and אלהים [ʔɛlo:hí:m] 'God' as a species of Yahwist hypercorrection.[37]

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adds that the approach has not been used in a century. Further, he reasons that *if* there were such an accentual-syllabic metre, it would *necessarily* show up in the accent and syllable counts.

[37] There is the curious case of the refrain in Ps 56 where the transition has apparently been frozen in progress. The first line of the refrain reads

2.6.5. Methodologically, the details of pronunciation are beside the point. The question is how to evaluate the name metrically: how to metrically ‘count’ the theonym. Methodologically, we are committed to working from the Tiberian baseline for the internal reconstruction of the phonology. We are therefore committed to reading יהוה as the Q [ʔaðo:nɔ́:j] in the first instance. The crucial question then becomes whether the three syllables can scan metrically or not in any given poem.

בֵּאלֹהִים֮ אֲהַלֵּל דְּבָרֹו
‘In God I will praise his word’ (Ps 56:5a[4a])
be:lo:hí:m ʔahallé:l davɔ:ʀó:

When the refrain is repeated, the line now reads

בֵּאלֹהִים אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר
בַּיהוָה אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר׃
‘In God I will praise his word:
in the LORD I will praise his word’ (Ps 56:11[10])
be:lo:hí:m ʔahallé:l dɔ:vɔ́:ʀ
ba:ðo:nɔ́:j ʔahallé:l dɔ:vɔ́:ʀ